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(54) **FLEX CIRCUIT HAVING A MULTIPLE LAYERED STRUCTURE AND INTERCONNECT**

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H05K 1/00 (2006.01)
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H05K 1/02 (2006.01)

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CPC **G11B 13/04** (2013.01); **H05K 1/0277** (2013.01); **G11B 5/486** (2013.01); **G11B 5/4866** (2013.01)
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None
See application file for complete search history.

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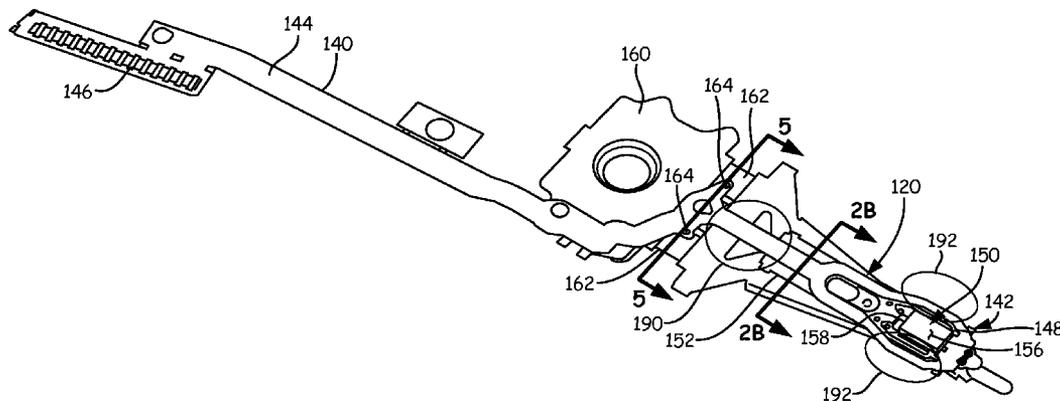
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A flex circuit including a multiple layer structure is disclosed. The multiple layered structure includes a first or top layer and a second or base layer. Top traces and bond pads are fabricated on the top or obverse layer and interlayer traces and bond pads are fabricated between the first and second layers to provide an electrical interconnect to electrical components on a head assembly. In an illustrated embodiment, the flex circuit includes portions including the first or base layer and the second or top layer and one or more reduced thickness portion including the first or base layer and not the second layer. In one embodiment, the gimbal portion of the flex circuit includes the first layer and not the second layer of the multiple layer structure and in another embodiment a bending portion of the flex circuit includes the first base layer and not the second layer of the multiple layered structure to provide a reduced thickness to facilitate bending, for example in a micro-actuation region of the load beam.

10 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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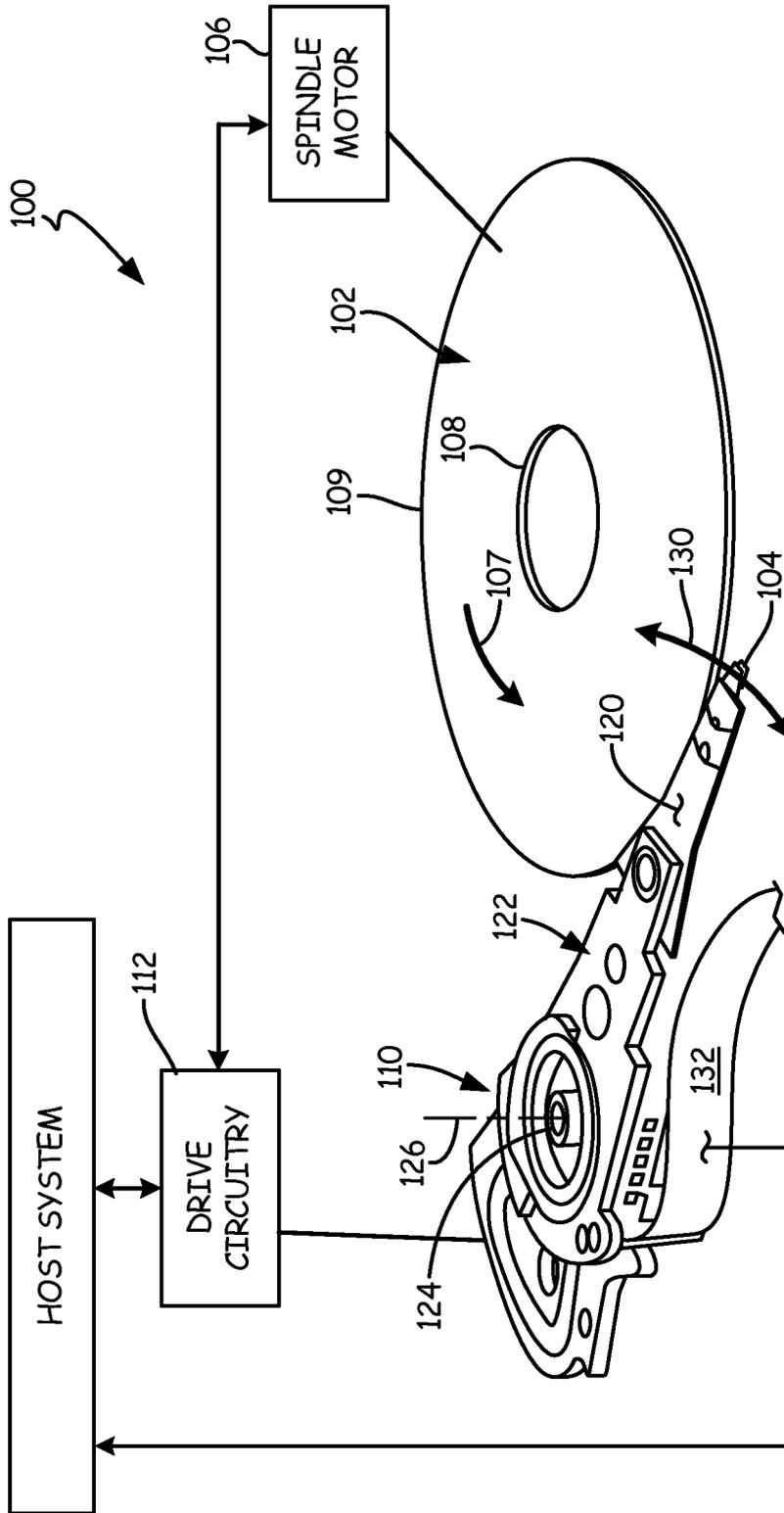


Fig. 1

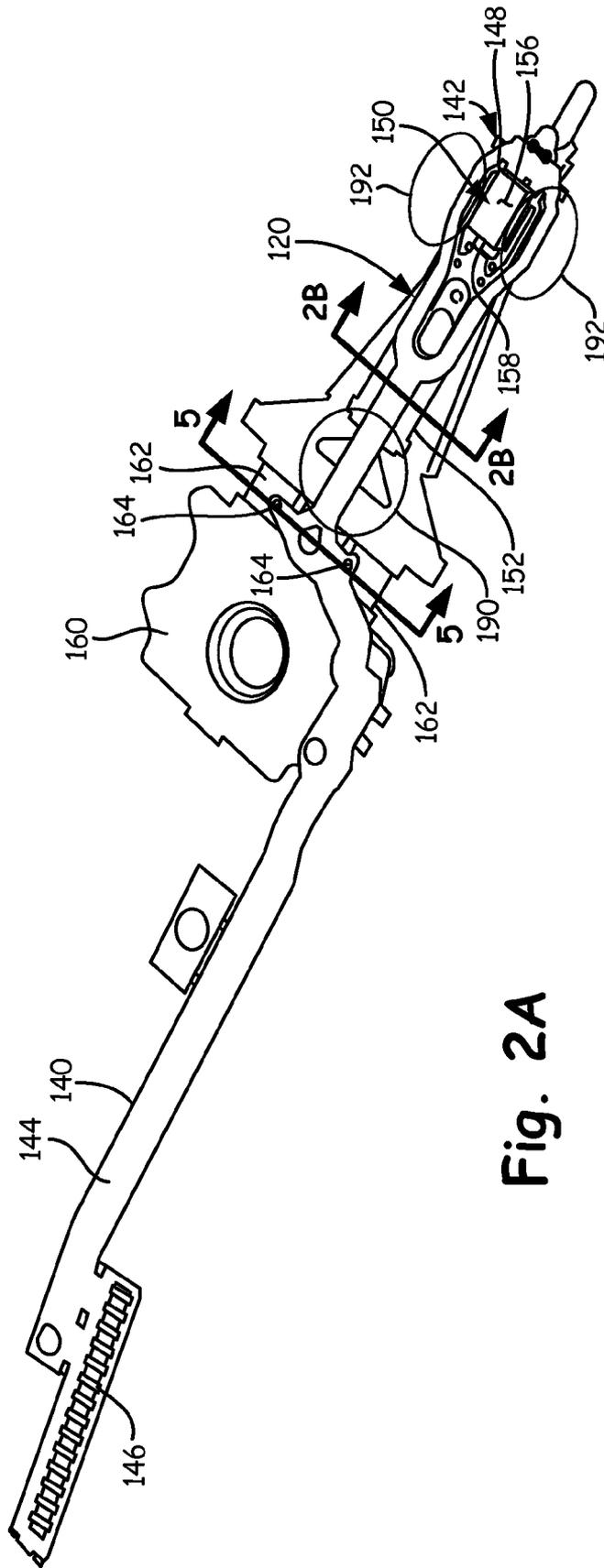


Fig. 2A

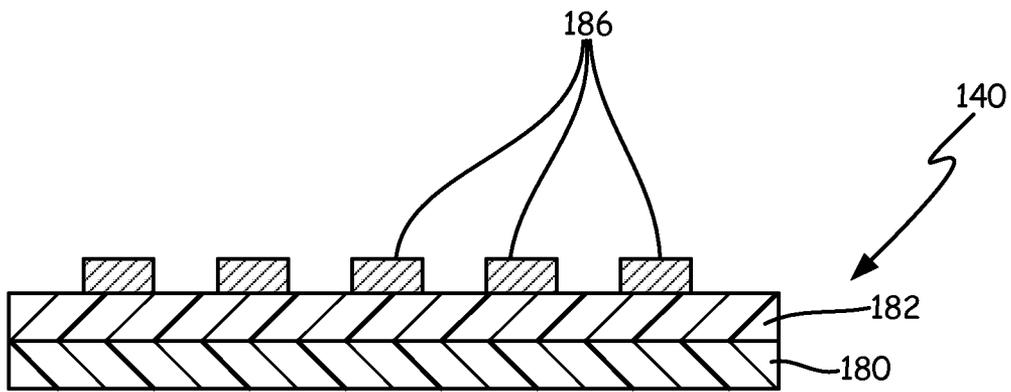


Fig. 2B

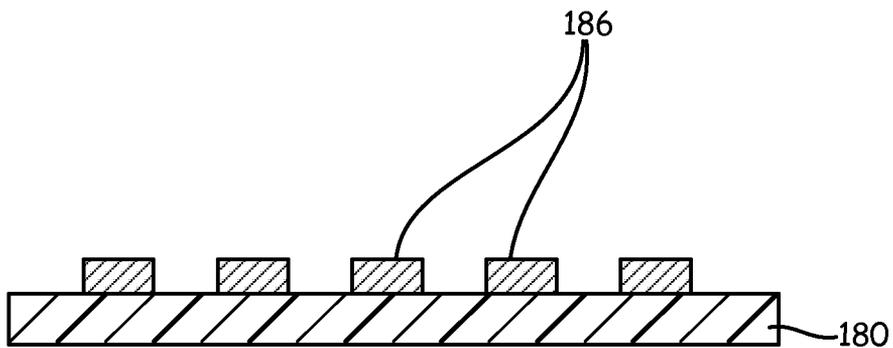


Fig. 2C

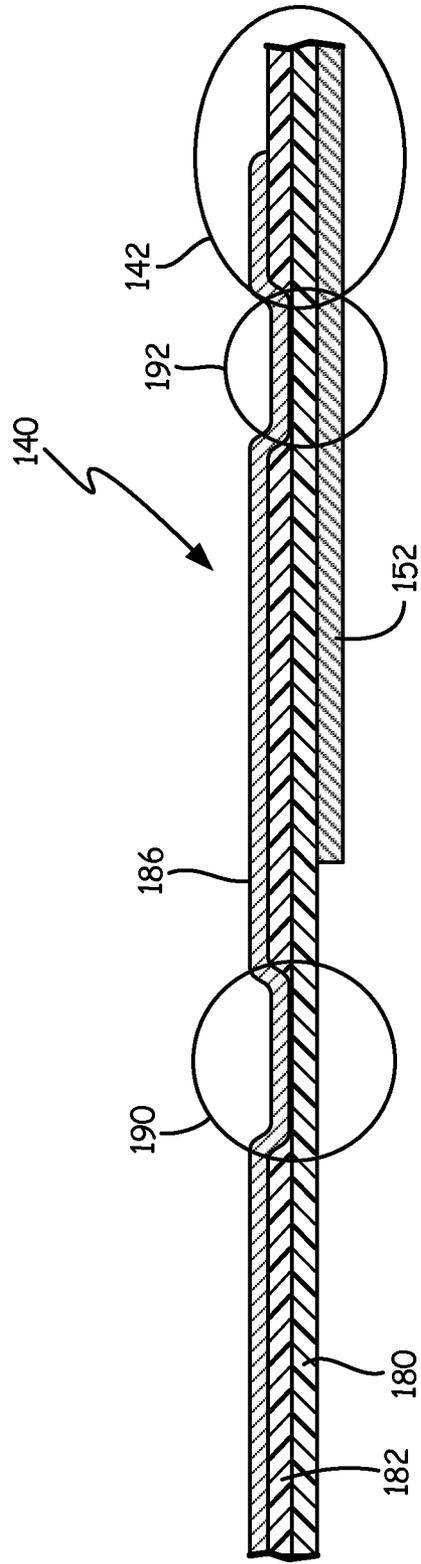


Fig. 2D

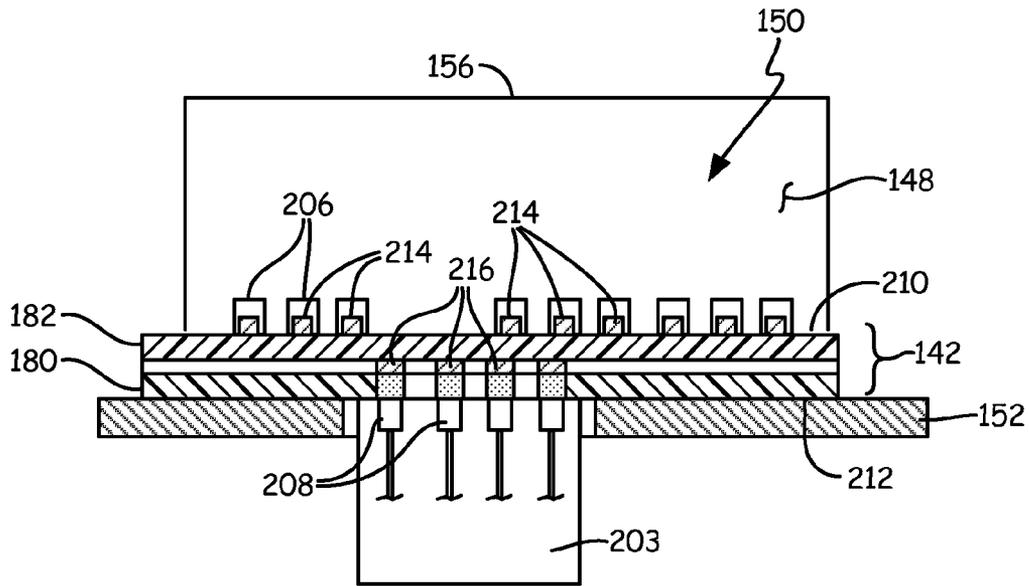


Fig. 3B

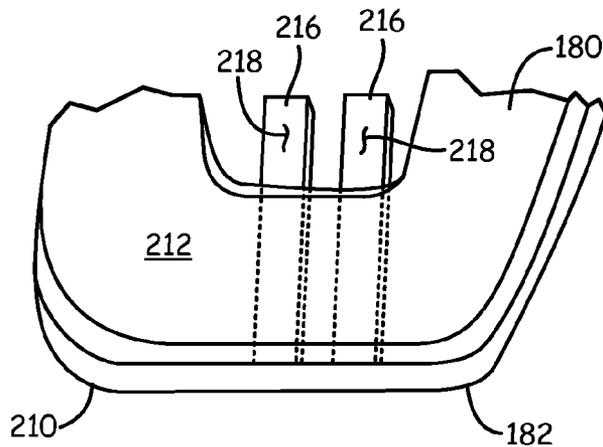


Fig. 3C

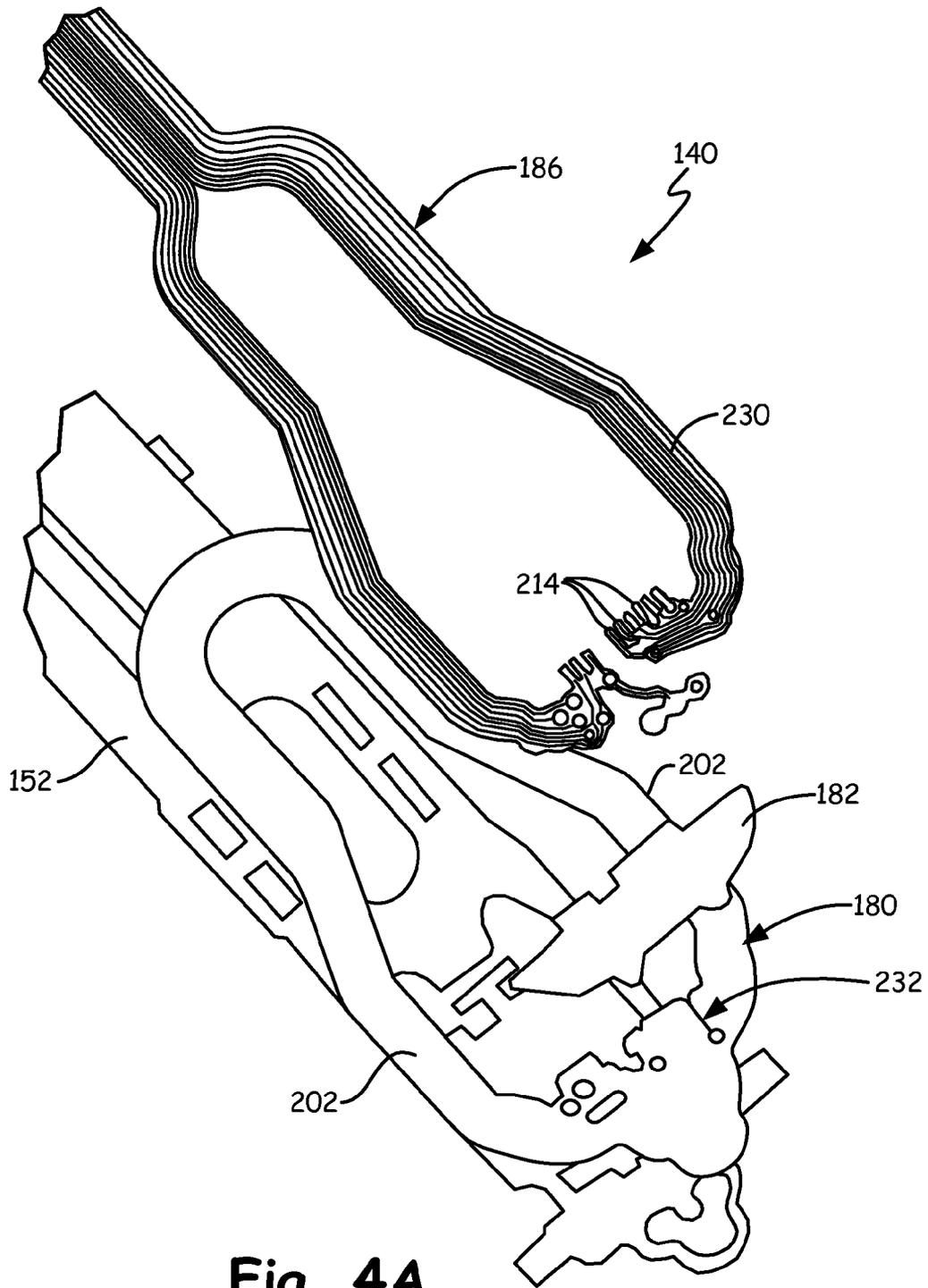


Fig. 4A

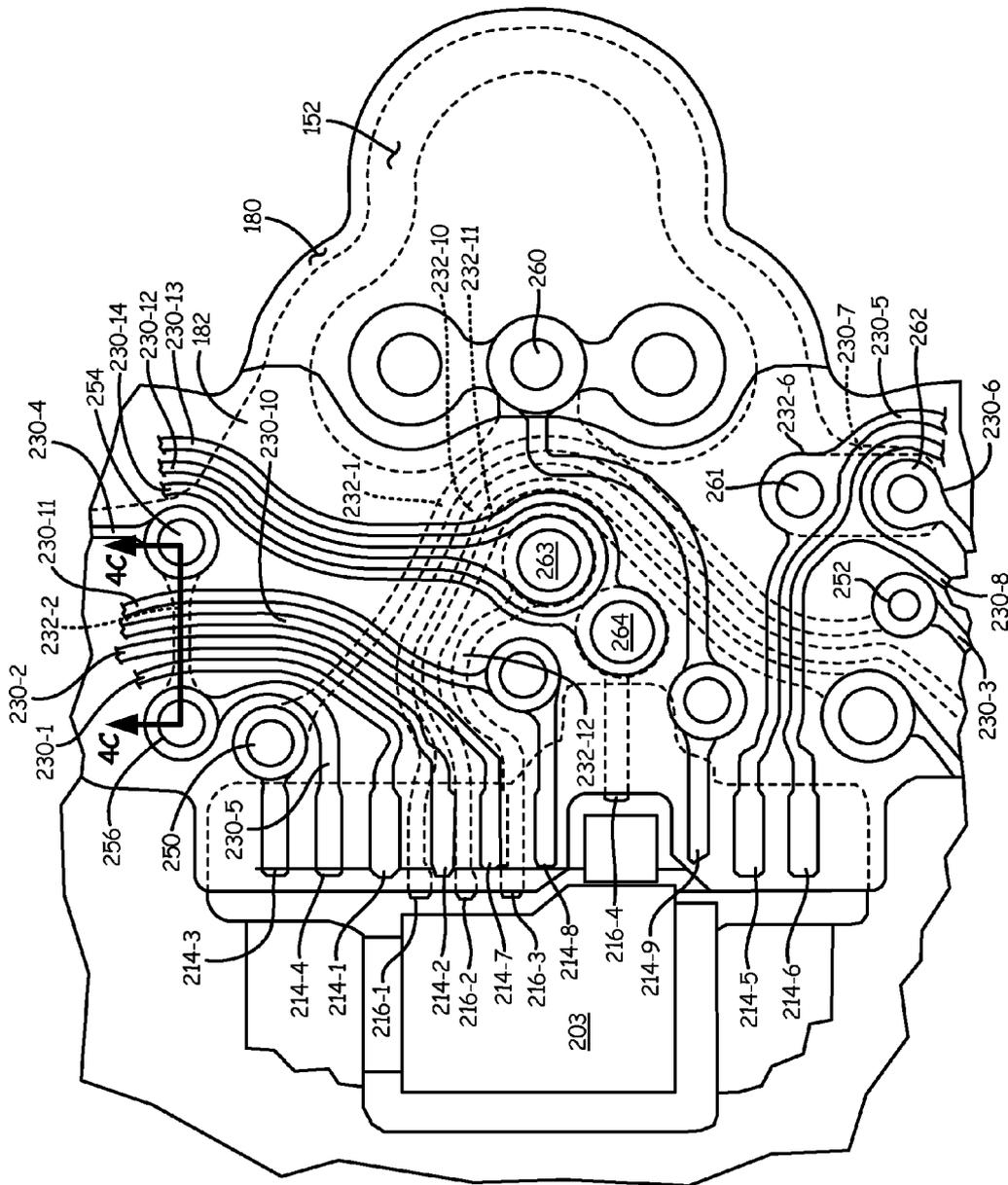


Fig. 4B

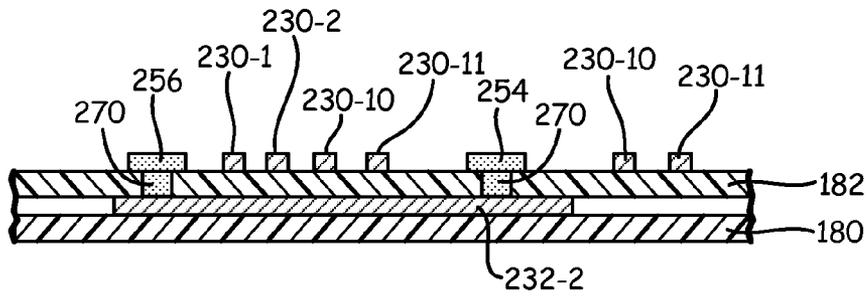


Fig. 4C

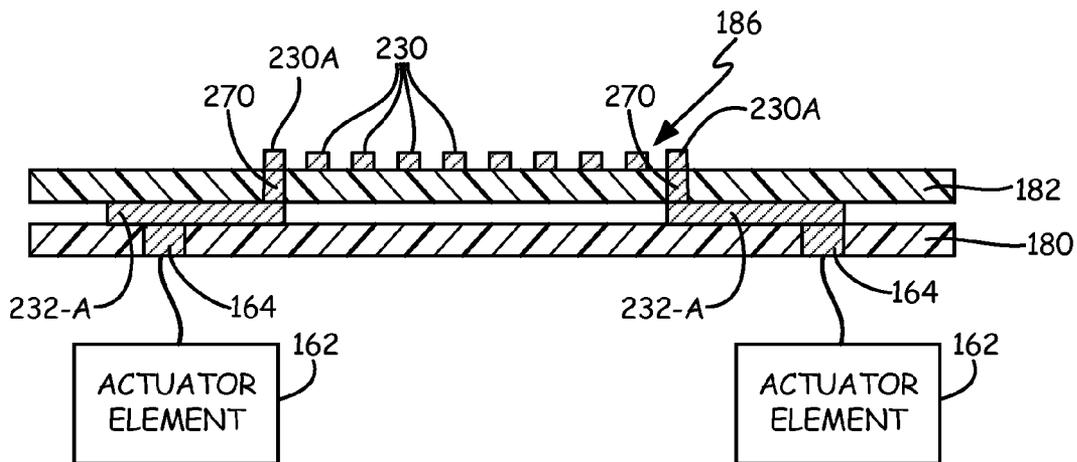


Fig. 5

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FLEX CIRCUIT HAVING A MULTIPLE LAYERED STRUCTURE AND INTERCONNECT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/638,415 filed on Apr. 25, 2012 for a "Selective Dual Layer Circuit for Laser on Slider HAMR Design", the content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

Data storage devices store digitally encoded data on disc or other magnetically encoded media. Demand for increased data storage has resulted in demand for higher recording density. Heat assisted magnetic recording uses heating elements or lasers to apply heat to magnetic media to enhance recording density. The addition of heat assisted magnetic recording increases the required number of traces and bond pads on a flex circuit to interconnect to the additional electrical components on the head or suspension assembly. Embodiments of the present invention provide solutions to these and other problems, and offer other advantages over the prior art.

SUMMARY

The present application relates to a flex circuit including a multiple layered structure and interconnect. In embodiments disclosed, the flex circuit includes a flexible structure including an elongate body and an interconnect portion. In an illustrated embodiment, the multiple layered structure includes top traces and bond pads and interlayer traces and bond pads to provide an electrical interconnect to multiple electrical components on the head assembly. In embodiments described, the flex circuit includes segments including a first or base layer and a second or top layer and one or more reduced thickness portions including the first or base layer and not the second layer. In one embodiment, the gimbal portion of the flex circuit includes the first layer and not the second layer of the multiple layer structure and in another embodiment a bending portion of the flex circuit includes the first base layer and not the second layer of the multiple layered structure to provide a reduced thickness to facilitate bending, for example, in a micro-actuation region of the load beam.

Other features and benefits that characterize embodiments of the present invention will be apparent upon reading the following detailed description and review of the associated drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of a data storage device in which embodiments of the present application are used.

FIG. 2A illustrates an embodiment of a flex circuit for a suspension assembly including a multiple layered structure and interconnect.

FIG. 2B is a cross-sectional view of an embodiment of a multiple layered flex circuit as taken along line 2B-2B of FIG. 2A.

FIG. 2C is a cross-sectional illustration of a reduced thickness region of an embodiment of the flex circuit including a first base layer and not the second or top layer.

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FIG. 2D illustrates an embodiment of the multiple layered flex circuit of FIG. 2A include a bending portion and gimbal portion having a reduced thickness formed of the first base layer and not the second top layer.

FIG. 3A is a detailed illustration of an embodiment of an interconnect portion of the flex circuit illustrated in FIG. 2A.

FIG. 3B illustrates an embodiment of a multiple layered interconnect portion including top and interlayer bond pads for connection to transducer elements of the slider and heating elements of a HAMR unit.

FIG. 3C is a detailed illustration of the interlayer bond pads of the flex circuit illustrated in FIG. 2A.

FIG. 4A is an exploded view of an interconnect portion of the flex circuit including a multiple layered structure including top and interlayer traces and bond pads.

FIG. 4B schematically illustrates an embodiment of top and interlayer traces and bond pads of an interconnect portion of an embodiment of a flex circuit of the type illustrated in FIG. 2A.

FIG. 4C is a cross-sectional view of the multiple layered structure of an interconnect portion taken along line 4C-4C of FIG. 4B.

FIG. 5 illustrates a multiple layered structure of the flex circuit including interlayer traces and contact terminals for connection to micro-actuator elements coupled to a load beam as taken along line 5-5 of FIG. 2A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

The present application relates to a flex circuit having application for providing an electrical connection to transducer or electrical components of a data storage device of the type illustrated in FIG. 1. The data storage device **100** shown in FIG. 1 includes a data storage media **102** to store digitally encoded data. A head assembly **104** is positioned above the media **102** to read data from and/or write data to the data storage media **102**. In the embodiment shown, the data storage media **102** is a rotating disc. For read and write operations, a spindle motor **106** (illustrated schematically) rotates the media **102** as illustrated by arrow **107** and an actuator mechanism **110** positions the head assembly **104** relative to data tracks on the rotating media **102** between an inner diameter **108** and an outer diameter **109** of the rotating media. Both the spindle motor **106** and actuator mechanism **110** are connected to and operated through drive circuitry **112** (schematically shown). In the illustrated embodiment, the head assembly **104** includes one or more transducer elements (not shown in FIG. 1) to read data from or write data to the data storage media **102**.

The head assembly **104** is coupled to the actuator mechanism **110** through a suspension assembly. As shown in FIG. 1, the suspension assembly includes a load beam **120** connected to an actuator arm **122** of the mechanism **110** for example through a swage connection. Although FIG. 1 illustrates a single load beam coupled to the actuator mechanism **110**, additional load beams and head assemblies **104** can be coupled to the actuator mechanism **110** to read data from or write data to multiple discs of a disc stack. The actuator mechanism **110** is rotationally coupled to a frame or deck (not shown) through a bearing **124** to rotate about axis **126**. Rotation of the actuator mechanism **110** moves the head assembly **104** in a cross track direction as illustrated by arrow **130**. The one or more transducer elements of the head assembly **104** are electrically coupled to head circuitry **132** to encode data on

the data storage media **102** and decode data from the data storage media **102** through a flex circuit **140** of the type illustrated in FIG. 2A.

The flex circuit **140** includes a flexible structure including an interconnect portion **142** and a tail portion **144**. A plurality of traces are formed along the length of the flex circuit **140** to form a connecting portion (along tail portion **144**) and the interconnect portion **142** to electrically connect elements of the head assembly **104** to the head circuitry **132**. The traces are connected to head circuitry **132** through contacts **146** on tail portion **144**. In an illustrated embodiment, the head assembly includes one or more transducer elements (not shown in FIG. 2) fabricated on a trailing edge **148** of a slider or slider body **150**. The slider **150** is coupled to the load beam **120** through a gimbal spring **152**. Rotation of the media creates an air flow along an air bearing surface (ABS) **156** of the slider from a leading edge **158** to the trailing edge **148** of the slider to read data from and write data to the media.

As shown, the load beam **120** is coupled to a mounting plate **160** swaged to actuator arm **122** as shown in FIG. 1. In the illustrated embodiment, the suspension assembly includes a micro-actuator assembly energizable to adjust the position of the head assembly **104** in the cross-track direction **130** to move the head assembly inwardly or outwardly (towards or away) with respect to the inner and outer diameters **108**, **109** of the media. In the illustrated embodiment the micro-actuator assembly includes opposed spaced piezoelectric beams **162** connecting the mounting portion **160** to the load beam **120**. In an illustrated embodiment, the piezoelectric beams **162** are coupled to traces on the flex circuit **140** through contacts **164**. The contacts **164** are connected in reverse polarity to circuitry to cooperatively extend and retract the beams **162** to move the head assembly **104** in the cross-track direction as illustrated by arrow **130**. For example, the inner beam is extended and the outer beam is retracted to move the head in an outward direction toward the outer diameter **109** and the outer beam is extended and the inner beam retracted to move the head in an inward direction toward the inner diameter **108** of the media **102**.

As shown, in FIG. 2B, in the illustrated embodiment, the flex circuit **140** includes a multiple layered flexible structure having a first insulating or base layer **180** and a second insulating layer **182** on the first layer **180**. As shown, conductive traces **186** are formed on the second layer **182** to interconnect with electrical components of the head assembly **104**. In an illustrated embodiment, the first and second insulating layers **180**, **182** are formed of a polyimide or other flexible material. The flex circuit can include additional layers including a top protective layer in addition to the multiple insulating layers **180**, **182** shown. The multiple layered structure increases rigidity of the flex circuit which reduces flexibility in the bending and gimbal regions of the suspension assembly. In the illustrated embodiment shown in FIG. 2A, gimbal and bending regions **190**, **192** of the flex circuit **140** includes the first layer **180** having the traces **186** formed thereon and not the second layer **182** as shown in FIG. 2C. Thus, as shown, in FIG. 2D, traces **186** (only one shown in FIG. 2D) are formed on the second layer **182** along portions of the flexible circuit **140** and along the first layer **180** along the bending and gimbal portions **190**, **192** including the first layer **180** and not the second layer **182**. Thus, the multiple layer structure facilitates different thickness portions to provide variable flexibility along regions of the suspension assembly.

FIG. 3A is a detailed illustration of an embodiment of the interconnect portion **142** providing the electrical interface to one or more electrical elements of the head assembly **104**. The interconnect portion **142** includes a plurality of bond pads

200 coupled to the traces **186** along spaced gimbal arms **202** of the flex circuit extending along opposed sides of the slider **150** to electrically connect the transducer elements on the head assembly **104** to the head circuitry **132**. As previously described the flexible structure of the gimbal portion or arms **202** includes the first layer **180** and not the second layer **182** and the interconnect portion **142** includes the multiple layered structure including the first and second layers **180**, **182**. In an illustrated embodiment, the traces **186** and bond pads **200** are formed of copper or other conductive material.

In the illustrated embodiment, the head assembly **104** includes the slider **150** and a heat assisted magnetic recording the HAMR unit **203** shown in FIG. 3B to heat the media to enhance magnetic recording. The multiple layer structure of the flex circuit shown in FIG. 3B facilitates connection to the transducer elements on the slider and one or more heating elements on a HAMR unit **203**. As cooperatively shown, the slider **150** is coupled to a tab portion **205** (shown in FIG. 3A) of the gimbal spring **152** and the flex circuit **140** is coupled to the gimbal spring **152**. The HAMR unit **203** is coupled to a back side of the slider **150** opposite the air bearing surface **156**. The HAMR unit **203** includes one or more heating or HAMR elements such as a laser diode and/or heat source to deliver heat to the media through a wave guide (not shown) fabricated on the slider **150** to enhance magnetic recording. Traces **186** on the flex circuit are coupled to the transducer elements on the slider **150** through bond pads **206** on the slider and to electrical or heating elements on the HAMR unit **203** through bond pads **208** on the HAMR unit **202**.

As illustrated in FIG. 3B, the multiple layered structure of the interconnect portion **142** has an obverse side **210** and reverse side **212**. The structure includes obverse side bond pads **214** formed on the first or top layer **182** of the multiple layered structure and interlayer bond pads **216** formed between the first and second layers **180**, **182**. The obverse side bond pads **214** form flex circuit slider bond pads configured connect to the bond pads **206** on the slider. The interlayer bond pads **216** form flex circuit HAMR bond pads configured to connect to the bond pads **208** on the HAMR unit **203**. As shown in FIG. 3C the interlayer bond pads **216** protrude from an edge of the flexible structure to provide a reverse bonding surface **218** to define the reverse side bond pads configured to connect to the bond pads **208** on the HAMR unit **203** on the back side of the slider **150**.

FIG. 4A illustrates an exploded view of the interconnect portion **142** of the flex circuit and gimbal spring **152**. As shown, the interconnect portion of flexible structure includes the first or base layer **180** and second layer **182** which forms the top or obverse layer. Top traces **230** on the obverse side of the flexible structure extend along the first layer **180** along the gimbal arms **202** of the flex circuit and along the second or top layer **182** of the interconnect portion **142**. Interlayer traces **232** connect to one or more of the top side traces **230** through conductive vias extending through the second layer **182**. Top and interlayer traces **230**, **232** include slider traces connected to the slider bond pads **214** on the obverse or second layer **182** and HAMR traces connected to the interlayer bond pads **216** forming the HAMR bond pads as previously described.

FIG. 4B is a detailed illustration of an embodiment of an interconnect portion design for slider traces and HAMR traces coupled to slider bond pads **214-1** through **214-9** on the top or obverse layer and HAMR or interlayer bond pads **216-1** through **216-4** (shown in dotted line). In the illustrated embodiment, the slider bond pads include read element pads **214-1** through **214-2**, heater bond pads **214-3** through **214-4**, writer pads **214-5** through **214-6**, thermal asperity pads **214-7** through **217-8** and ground pad **214-9**. Read pads **214-1**

through **214-2** are coupled to top or obverse layer traces **230-1** and **230-2** on the second or top layer **182**. Heater bond pad **214-3** is coupled to top trace **230-3** through interlayer trace **232-1**. As shown, the bond pad **214-3** is connected to interlayer trace **232-1** at terminal **250** and to top or obverse trace **230-3** at terminal **252**.

Heater pad **214-4** is coupled to top trace **230-4** through interlayer trace **232-2** connected to heater pad **214-3** through top trace **230-5**. Top trace **230-4** is connected to interlayer trace **232-2** at terminal **254** and to top trace **230-5** at terminal **256**. Writer pad **214-5** is coupled multiple top traces **230-5**, **230-6** through an interlayer trace or conductive path **232-6** at terminals **261**, **262**. Writer pad **214-6** is coupled to multiple top traces **230-7** and **230-8**. Thermal asperity pads **214-7** and **214-8** are coupled to top traces **230-10** and **230-11**. Ground pad **214-9** is coupled to ground via connection to ground terminal **260** conductively coupled to gimbal spring **152**.

HAMR or interlayer pads **216-1** and **216-2** for a photo diode element are coupled to top traces (not numbered) through interlayer traces **232-10** and **232-11**. HAMR or interlayer pad **216-3** for a laser element is coupled to top trace **230-12** through interlayer trace **232-12** at terminal **263**. Interlayer pad **216-4** for the laser element is coupled to top or obverse traces **230-13** and **230-14** through terminal **264**.

FIG. 4C is a cross-sectional view along line FIG. 4C-4C of FIG. 4B and illustrates connection of top layer traces **230** or bond pads **214** to interlayer traces **232** through conductive vias **270** extending through the second or top layer **182**. The particular cross-section shown illustrates connection of heater trace **230-5** coupled to heater bond pad **214-4** to interlayer trace **232-2** at terminal **156** and connection of interlayer trace **232-2** to top layer trace **230-4** at terminal **254**. Thus, the top layer or obverse trace is routed to an interlayer trace to facilitate the multiple connections within the form factor interconnect. Similarly other top and interlayer traces are connected through conductive vias at terminals **252**, **261**, **262**, **263**, **264** as previously described to provide an interconnect design with space to accommodate multiple electrical elements of the head assembly.

FIG. 5 illustrates the multiple layer section of the flex circuit **140** including a microactuator interconnect to connect traces to the actuator elements **162** for operation. As shown, top traces **230** formed on the obverse side or top layer **182** of the multiple layer structure include microactuator traces **230A** connected to reverse side contacts **164** through interlayer traces **232A** as shown. The top layer or actuator traces **230A** are coupled to the interlayer traces **232A** through conductive vias **270** extending through the top or second layer **182** to connect to contacts **164** to energize the micro-actuator elements. Thus, as described segments of the flex circuit include multiple layers including the first and second layers and other segments include a first layer and not the second layer to reduce thickness. Although the flex circuit is described with first and second layers, embodiments are not limited to first and second layers and additional layers or top layers can be included in the multiple layer segment or the segments including the first insulating layer and not the second. The multiple layer flex circuit described can be fabricated using thin film deposition techniques to deposit and etch the multiple layers to form the multiple segments including the reduced thickness segments and to form the top or obverse bond pads or traces and the interlayer bond pads and traces.

It is to be understood that even though numerous characteristics and advantages of various embodiments of the invention have been set forth in the foregoing description, together with details of the structure and function of various embodi-

ments of the invention, this disclosure is illustrative only, and changes may be made in detail, especially in matters of structure and arrangement of parts within the principles of the present invention to the full extent indicated by the broad general meaning of the terms in which the appended claims are expressed. For example, the particular elements may vary depending on the particular application while maintaining substantially the same functionality without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. In addition, although the preferred embodiment described is related to flex circuit having application for a HAMR application, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the teachings of the present invention can be applied to other head interconnect applications, without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A flex circuit comprising:

an elongate flexible structure having an elongate body including a first insulating layer and a second insulating layer and one or more bond pads along an interconnect portion of the body coupled to one or more conductive traces along the elongate body; and

a reduced thickness segment along the elongate body including the first insulating layer and not the second insulating layer,

wherein the interconnect portion includes the first and second insulating layers, and

wherein the first insulating layer is in contact with the second insulating layer in the interconnect portion.

2. The flex circuit of claim 1 wherein the one or more conductive traces are formed on the first insulating layer of the reduced thickness segment and along the second insulating layer of the interconnect portion.

3. The flex circuit of claim 1 wherein the flexible structure includes opposed spaced arms between the interconnect portion and a tail portion and the opposed spaced arms include the first layer and not the second layer to provide the reduced thickness segment.

4. The flex circuit of claim 1 wherein the flexible structure includes a bending portion between the interconnect portion and an end of the flex circuit and the bending portion includes the first layer and not the second layer to provide the reduced thickness region.

5. The flex circuit of claim 4 wherein the one or more traces are formed along the first layer of the bending portion and along the second layer of the interconnect portion of the flex circuit.

6. A flex circuit comprising:

an elongate flexible structure having an elongate body including a first insulating layer and a second insulating layer and one or more bond pads along an interconnect portion of the body coupled to one or more conductive traces along the elongate body; and

a reduced thickness segment along the elongate body including the first insulating layer and not the second insulating layer,

wherein the interconnect portion includes the first and second insulating layers and multiple trace layers including one or more conductive traces on the second layer and one or more interlayer traces formed between the first and second layers and the one or more conductive traces on the second layer and the one or more interlayer traces are coupled to the one or more bond pads.

7. The flex circuit of claim 6 wherein the one or more interlayer layer traces are coupled to the one or more conductive traces on the second insulating layer through conductive vias extending through the second insulating layer.

8. The flex circuit of claim 6 wherein the one or more interlayer traces are coupled to one or more of a plurality of traces on the first insulating layer through vias extending through the flexible structure.

9. A flex circuit comprising:

an elongate flexible structure having an elongate body including a first insulating layer and a second insulating layer and one or more bond pads along an interconnect portion of the body coupled to one or more conductive traces along the elongate body; and

a reduced thickness segment along the elongate body including the first insulating layer and not the second insulating layer,

wherein the interconnect portion includes the first and second insulating layers and multiple trace layers including one or more obverse side traces coupled to one or more obverse side bond pads and one or more interlayer traces between the first and second layers coupled to one or more reverse side bond pads.

10. The flex circuit of claim 9 wherein the one or more obverse side traces and the bond pads are formed on the second layer.

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